

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 INR-07 L-02 ACDA-05

NSAE-00 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 SS-15 NSC-05 DODE-00 FEAE-00 EB-07 COME-00

COA-01 DLOS-03 INT-05 OMB-01 /079 W

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R 141325Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7540

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL IZMIR

USMISSION NATO

EUCOM

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, TU, GR

SUBJ: PRIMIN IRMAK COMMENTS ON AEGEAN ISSUES

REF: ANKARA 339

SUMMARY: PRIMIN IRMAK REBUTS ECEVIT CRITICISM, CALLS AVEROFF STATEMENT A "BLUFF," AND SAYS THAT SEISMIC SHIP WILL PROSPECT IN AEGEAN BEFORE LONG. END SUMMARY

1. PRIMIN IRMAK, IN WRITTEN STATEMENT TO PRESS JANUARY 13, RESPONDED TO CRITICISM OF GOT AEGEAN POLICY BY REPUBLICAN PEOPLES' PARTY CHAIRMAN ECEIVT ON JANUARY 12 (REFTEL). HIS MAIN POINTS:

A. TURKISH RIGHTS AND INTERESTS IN AEGEAN WERE NOT LESS THAN THOSE OF GREECE, AND WHILE TURKEY WANTS THE AEGEAN TO BE AN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AREA OF PEACE AND COOPERATION, SHE IS DETERMINED TO PROTECT HER

RIGHTS, INCLUDING HER "OIL PROSPECTING RIGHTS ON THE CONTINENTAL SHELF OF ANATOLIA."

B. IRMAK SAID THAE AVEROFF STATEMENT (REFTEL) WAS "UNSERIOUS (AND) CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS A BLUFF." HE CONTRASTED IT WITH THE "COOL-HEADED" STANCE OF GOT.

2. IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW APPEARING IN JANUARY 14 MILLIYET, IRMAK AMPLIFIED HIS VIEWS. SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS, HE SAID, SHOWED THAT THE ANATOLIAN CONTINENTAL SHELF EXTENDED TO THE MIDDLE OF THE AEGEAN. HE PROPOSED THAT GREECE AND TURKEY REACH AN AGREEMENT ON A DEMARCATION LINE AND THAT EACH PROSPECT FOR OIL WITHIN ITS REGION OR, IF GREECE PREFERRED, AGREE ON JOINT PROSPECTING. REFERRING TO THE NORWEGIAN SEISMIC SURVEY SHIP UNDER CONTRACT TO GOT, HE SAID IT WAS NOW EXPLORING IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND WOULD BEGIN PROSPECTING BEFORE LONG IN THE REGION FROM THE BAY OF SAROZ AND THE CANAKKALE COAST TO WEST OF IZMIR.

3. COMMENT: IRMAK'S STATEMENTS ON TURKISH RIGHTS AND HIS SUGGESTIONS FOR GRECO-TURKISH AGREEMENT REFLECT ESTABLISHED GOT POLICY. PLAN FOR FURTHER PROSPECTING WHICH HE MENTIONED COULD RESULT IN PERHAPS LENGTHY DELAY IN EXPLORATION IN WATERS UNDER CONTENTION, SINCE SEISMIC VESSEL WOULD FIRST FINISH CURRENT OPERATIONS IN MEDITERRANEAN, THEN MOVE TO BAY OF SAROZ (TURKISH TERRITORIAL WATERS), AND FINALLY ENTER ZONE BETWEEN CANAKKALE AND IZMIR, WHERE POSSIBILITY OF ITS ENTERING DISPUTED ZONE WOULD EXIST.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, CONTINENTAL SHELF, BOUNDARY DETERMINATION, POLITICAL LEADERS, OFFSHORE OIL FIELDS, BOUNDARY CLAIMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MorefiRH
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ANKARA00361
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750014-0061
From: ANKARA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750155/aaaabwdu.tel
Line Count: 89
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 ANKARA 339
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MorefiRH
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 APR 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <16 MAY 2003 by MorefiRH>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRIMIN IRMAK COMMENTS ON AEGEAN ISSUES
TAGS: PFOR, PLOS, TU, GR, (ECEVIT, BULENT), (AVEROFF, EVANGELOS), (IRMAK, SADI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006